

Detection of adsorbates on interior surfaces of holey fibers

1 CROSS REFERENCE TO RELATED APPLICATIONS

2 This application is a continuation-in-part (CIP) of copending U.S. Application Serial Number
3 10/317,744 filed 12/12/02 (now patent 6,661,957 issued 12/09/03) which was a
4 continuation-in-part (CIP) of copending U.S. Application Serial Number 09/907,241 filed
5 7/17/01 (now US Patent 6,496,634 issued 12/17/02), the above applications being incorporated
6 herein by reference in their entirety including incorporated material.

7 FIELD OF THE INVENTION

8 The field of the invention is the field of optical fibers for the conduction of
9 electromagnetic radiation, wherein the fibers have holes running along the fiber axis.

10 BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

11 Fig. 1 is a cross sectional view of a “holey” optical fiber of the invention.

12 Fig. 2 is a sketch of the system of the invention.

13 DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE INVENTION

15 Copending U.S. Application Serial Number 10/317,744 filed 12/12/02 (now patent
16 6,661,957 issued 12/09/03) and its parent application 09/907,241 filed 7/17/01 (now US Patent
17 6,496,634 issued 12/17/02), included a detailed description of an optical fiber having fluid filled
18 holes for Raman amplification of light. Fig. 1 shows a sketch of a cross section of the optical
19 fiber 10 of the invention. The fiber 10 comprises a core region 12 and a transparent cladding
20 region 14 surrounding the core region. The core region contains a plurality of holes 16
21 elongated in the axial direction of the fiber. The core region may or may not contain a central
22 hole region 18. The walls of at least one hole or the central region have an optically active

1 material 17 adsorbed on to the wall.

2 Optical fibers will have a useful life measured in decades, and the material of the
3 cladding 14 is usually fused silica.

4 When light is propagated down the fiber 10, it will propagate a great distance with high
5 power. If the optically active material 17 is a Raman active material, Raman light will be
6 generated and will also propagate down the axis of the fiber or may escape through the
7 transparent walls of the fiber. The Raman light may be detected and thus the presence of the
8 Raman active material may be detected.

9 Similarly, if the adsorbed material is an infrared, visible, or ultraviolet active material,
10 light propagating down the optical fiber will be absorbed or scattered or fluoresced, and the
11 presence of the material can be detected by detectors placed either at the output of the axis of the
12 fiber or at the side of the fiber.

13 It is well known that molecules adsorbed on surfaces often have a much enhanced Raman
14 cross section. Polar molecules such as air pollutants carbon monoxide, nitrogen oxide, and
15 nitrogen dioxide are particularly preferred embodiments of the invention. Detection of biothreat
16 materials such as bacteria and nerve gas material are also preferred embodiments of the
17 invention. For purposes of investigation of relatively large entities like bacteria, the central hole
18 region 18 may be much larger than the core region of a single mode optical fiber.

19 The method of the invention comprises introducing optically active molecules or other
20 entities into the hollow core region 18 or into the holes 16 of the holey fiber, and propagating
21 light down the axis of the core. The light will be guided by the holey fiber, and the intensity and
22 interaction length will be much larger than if the light is merely focused in a gas or other fluid
23 medium. It is well known that optically active molecules like carbon monoxide or nitrous oxide
24 can be made to "stick" to either the clean walls of the holes or to specially prepared material of
25 the walls.

26 Fig. 2 shows a sketch of the system of the invention. Light output from one or more
27 lasers or other sources of light 22 is introduced into the fiber of the invention 20 by an optical
28 apparatus 24 as is known in the art. Optical apparatus 26 is used to conduct light from the fiber
29 20 to detectors, spectral analysis units, signal splitters, demodulators, etc 28 as are known in the

1 art. Control apparatus 26 controls the light generator 22 and optical apparatus 24 and
2 communicates with detectors etc. 28.

3 Obviously, many modifications and variations of the present invention are possible in
4 light of the above teachings. It is therefore to be understood that, within the scope of the
5 appended claims, the invention may be practiced otherwise than as specifically described.